

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 CAIRO 07202 290919Z
ACTION NEA-10

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R 281512Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO USDOC WASHDC
INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USLO RIYADH
RUEHCBXSECSTATE WASHDC 4441
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS CAIRO 7202

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, EG
SUBJECT: ALABAMA TRADE MISSION

1. ALABAMA TRADE MISSION DEPARTED APRIL 25 AFTER USEFUL EXPLORATORY VISIT TO CAIRO.
 2. GROUP ARRIVED AS SCHEDULED APRIL 20 AND WAS MET AT AIRPORT BY EMBASSY CONTROL OFFICER AND REPRESENTATIVE OF MINISTRY OF ECONOMY. USE OF VIP LOUNGE HAD BEEN ARRANGED.
 3. EMBASSY BRIEFING, INCLUDING PRESENTATION BY AID, TOOK PLACE MORNING OF FIRST WORKING DAY. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY MEETING AT FEDERATION OF EGYPTIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE WHERE MISSION MEMBERS HAD OPPORTUNITY MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FIRMS IN FIELDS RELATED TO THEIR AREAS OF INTEREST. ALSO ON HAND WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND OF COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION OFFICE OF MINISTRY OF TRADE. AFTERNOONS DURING VISIT WERE DEVOTED TO EMBASSY-ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS WITH BUSINESSMEN AND POTENTIAL AGENTS.
 4. HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL RECEPTION FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND UNCLASSIFIED
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- BUSINESS GUESTS WAS ATTENDED BY MINISTER OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION AND OTHER OFFICIALS OF THAT MINISTRY; REPRESENTATIVES OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION, INDUSTRY, AND ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROUPS, BANKS, PUBLIC WORKS AGENCIES, AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FIRMS IN APPROPRIATE FIELDS.
5. FOLLOWING FREE DAY DURING FRIDAY MUSLIM SABBATH, ENGAGEMENTS

RESUMED APRIL 23 WITH MEETING WITH MINISTER OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION. MISSION THEN MET WITH GROUP OF ENGINEERS, BUSINESSMEN AND OFFICIALS IN BUILDING AND OTHER APPROPRIATE INDUSTRIES AT HEADQUARTERS OF FEDERATION OF EGYPTIAN INDUSTRIES. FEDERATION LATER HOSTED ELABORATE LUNCHEON FOR MISSION AT PRIVATE CLUB AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE HOSTED EVENING RECEPTION IN THEIR HONOR AT HILTON HOTEL. NEXT DAY, GROUP MET, AS HAD BEEN REQUESTED, WITH MINISTER OF STATE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT. TWO MISSION MEMBERS SUBSEQUENTLY VISITED CAIRO WATER AUTHORITY OFFICES. APPROPRIATE CONTACTS AND APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE FOR ALL MISSION MEMBERS DURING VISIT DESPITE VERY WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS--E.G. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, PLUMBING-FIXTURES, AND VEHICLE AIR CONDITIONERS--GROUPED UNDER RUBRIC OF BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION.

6. WHILE, MOST MISSION MEMBERS FELT VISIT WAS USEFUL, SOME FOUND THAT MARKET DID NOT SEEM READY FOR THEIR PRODUCTS. SOME MEMBERS ALSO APPEARED HAVE DIFFICULTY ADJUSTING TO VERY DIFFERENT COMMERCIAL SITUATION IN EGYPT --RELATIVE ABUNDANCE OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED BUILDING PRODUCTS; COMPLEX IMPORT AND AGENCY REGULATIONS; AND LACK OF FOREIGN-EXCHANGE BUYING POWER--AS COMPARED WITH WIDE-OPEN, BOOMING, EXTREMELY WEALTHY SAUDI ARABIA FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME. EILTS

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